

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRETOR 04792 01 OF 02 151134Z
ACTION CU-05

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8829
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INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 4792

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIS SF (DOBBINS, CHERYL J.; RUDLEDGE, PHILLIP)
SUBJ: VISAS DENIED VOLSPKRS RUTLEDGE AND DOBBINS

REF: USIA 25385

1. BRAND FOURIE CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE EVENING OF
SEPT 13 TO INFORM ME THAT THE DEPT OF INTERIOR
HAD DECIDED TO DENY VISAS TO CHERYL J. DOBBINS, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, POSITIVE FUTURES, INC., AND PHILLIP RUTLEDGE,
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
(BOTH ARE VOLSPKRS). BY WAY OF EXPLANATION HE SAID THAT
THE SAG HAD NOTED THAT OVER PAST MONTHS VARIOUS SPEAKERS
HAD COME TO SOUTH AFRICA "UNDER USIS AUSPICES" ALL OF
WHOM FALL "INTO THE PATTERN OF PROVOCATIVE LECTURERS."
HE MENTIONED PROF. YVONNE PERRY, PROF. J.O. HOPKINS
AND MS. DOROTHY HEIGHT AS FALLING WITHIN THE CATEGORY.
(COMMENT: PROF. HOPKINS' VISIT WAS NOT SPONSORED BY
USIS.) HE SAID THE THEME OF THESE SPEAKERS "IS BASICALLY
TO STRESS NEGRO EXPERIENCE IN THE US AND HOW IT
COMPARES TO THE BLACK MAN IN SOUTH AFRICA." THESE
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 04792 01 OF 02 151134Z

SPEAKERS ARE "NOT CONDUCIVE TO PEACE AND HARMONY...
THEY ARE DISTURBING GOOD RELATIONS." DOBBINS AND
RUTLEDGE, FOURIE CONTINUED, WOULD APPEAR TO FALL INTO
THE SAME CATEGORY OF SPEAKERS AND WERE HENCE BEING
DENIED VISAS.

2. I SAID I WAS NOT AWARE THAT OUR SPEAKERS WERE BEING

PROVOCATIVE. WHEN THEY SPOKE OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IT WAS BECAUSE THEY CONSIDERED THAT THE LESSONS WE HAVE LEARNED MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO OTHERS. I WAS NOT AWARE THAT ANY OF THE SPEAKERS HAD ADVOCATED VIOLENCE IN DEALING WITH RACIAL ISSUES. FOURIE LISTENED BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PURPOSE OF MY BEING CALLED IN WAS TO INFORM ME OF A DECISION AND NOT TO DEBATE IT.

3. I THEN ASKED HIM WHETHER THIS REFLECTED A CHANGE OF SAG POLICY TOWARD OUR INFORMATION ACTIVITIES HERE. I NOTED THAT PROF. PERRY AND MS. HEIGHT WERE HERE LAST YEAR AND NO REPRESENTATIONS WERE MADE AT THAT TIME ABOUT THEIR SPEECHES AND SEMINARS. FOURIE DID NOT ANSWER THIS DIRECTLY, LIMITING HIMSELF TO REPEATING THAT THE PRESENCE OF THESE SPEAKERS WAS NOT HELPFUL TO OUR RELATIONS.

4. COMMENT: I TAKE THIS TO MEAN THAT THE SAG HAS REACHED A DECISION TO RESTRICT FUTURE SPEAKERS FROM COMING TO SOUTH AFRICA WHO MIGHT ADDRESS WHAT THEY REGARD AS THE ISSUE OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS. IN ITS BELEAGUERED FRAME OF MIND, THE GOVT INCREASINGLY FEARS DEVELOPMENT OF A BLACK MOVEMENT AND PROBABLY THINKS THAT BLACK AMERICAN SPEAKERS ENCOURAGE ITS GROWTH EVEN IF THEY LIMIT THEMSELVES TO TALKING ABOUT THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE.
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PAGE 03 PRETOR 04792 01 OF 02 151134Z

5. THIS IS THE FIRST DIRECT INDICATION OF LIMITATION OF OUR INFORMATION ACTIVITIES. FOURIE WAS CAREFUL TO POINT OUT THAT DOBBINS AND RUTLEDGE WERE NOT BEING TURNED DOWN BECAUSE THEY ARE BLACK. THEN TENOR OF THE CONVERSATION, HOWEVER, WAS THAT HENCEFORTH SPEAKERS ON RACIAL MATTERS WOULD BE CAREFULLY SCREENED AND THOSE WHOM THE SAG BELIEVES WILL BE TALKING ABOUT THE AMERICAN RACIAL EXPERIENCE WILL BE TURNED DOWN. THE SAG SEEMS TO HAVE EMBARKED ON THIS COURSE AT A TIME WHEN IT STATES PUBLICLY THAT AN EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO APPEAL TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE OVER THE HEAD OF THE ADMINISTRATION. THE SABC ANNOUNCED THIS MORNING THAT LES DE VILLIERS WAS RESIGNING HIS POSITION AS DEPUTY HEAD OF THE DEPT OF INFORMATION IN ORDER TO TAKE A POSITION WITH AN AMERICAN FIRM (NOT IDENTIFIED) IN THE UNITED STATES WHICH IS ASSISTING THE SAG EXPLAIN SOUTH AFRICAN REALITIES TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 04792 02 OF 02 151140Z

ACTION CU-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRETORIA 4792

6. WE DO NOT THINK THAT THIS LATEST ACTION SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PASS WITHOUT A CLEAR REACTION. OUR OPTIONS ARE TO PROTEST THE VISAS REFUSALS OR TO MANIFEST OUR DISPLEASURE BY PLACING OBSTACLES ON TRAVEL TO THE US BY SELECTED SOUTH AFRICANS. WE DOUBT THAT A PROTEST WILL AVAIL MUCH, GIVEN THE GROWING SIEGE MENTALITY HERE. MORE TELLING WOULD BE:

(A) TO CANCEL THE DOBBINS AND RUTLEDGE PROGRAMS ALREADY SET UP HERE (INVITATIONS HAVE ALREADY GONE OUT) AND LET IT BE KNOWN PUBLICLY WHY THIS WAS NECESSARY;

(B) TO SUBJECT VISA APPLICATIONS FROM DEPT OF INFORMATION OFFICIALS OR MEMBERS OF SEMI-OFFICIAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G., FOREIGN AFFAIRS ASSOCIATION, SOUTH AFRICA FOUNDATION) TRAVELING TO THE US TO TAKE PART IN CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, LECTURES, ETC., WHERE THE PRESUMPTION IS THAT THEY WILL ARGUE THE SOUTH AFRICAN POSITION AGAINST THE US, TO THE CLOSEST SCRUTINY, INCLUDING ADVISORY OPINIONS, WITH A VIEW TO DETERMINING WHETHER THE VISA SHOULD BE REFUSED OR AT LEAST SUBSTANTIALLY DELAYING ISSUANCE
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 04792 02 OF 02 151140Z

OF SUCH VISAS.

7. WE BELIEVE THAT THE FOREGOING STEPS WILL QUICKLY

CONVEY A MESSAGE TO THE SAG THAT RESTRICTION OF
AMERICANS COMING HERE UNDER OUR AUSPICES WILL NOT PASS
UNNOTICED. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT'S AUTHORIZATION
TO PROCEED ALONG LINES OF (A) AND (B).
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